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NEWSCASTER: And urban planners are unveiling a blueprint for getting around Southern California in the coming years. That report from the Southern California Association of Governments representing Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura and Imperial counties.

And joining us live on the KNX News Line the SCAG Executive Director Mark Pisano to tell us all about it. Mr. Pisano, thanks for being with us here on KNX.

MARK PISANO: Thank you, Rob [Ron?] for inviting me.

NEWSCASTER: Well, I suppose, without making a pun, this is sort of looking down the road 30 years or so.

PISANO: It is. It's Destination 2030. How do we, in fact, deal with the congestion? And how do we move people and goods and at the same time maintain our air quality and improve the livability of our communities.

NEWSCASTER: Boy, you've just about touched on every problem that might confront Southern California in the next 30 years.

PISANO: It is. This is one of the most innovative and one of the most important plans that we've put forward in this agency, and it deals with a problem that is really pressing on all of us; and that is, we're having a hard time moving around.

NEWSCASTER: No question about that, bus strikes notwithstanding. So give me an idea. What are we looking at? What needs to be done here that – and maybe more importantly, what can be done here over the next two or three decades to actually get people to and from where they need to be? Because certainly we know that the population of Los Angeles 30 years from now is going to be enormously bigger than it is right now.

PISANO: We're planning to add six-million people. That's a lot of people and a lot more congestion. And a couple of the key principles of the plan are, number one, we can't just build our way out of the problem.

And one of the main elements of this plan is: how do we coordinate the growth and development plans and the plans of each of our cities and counties so that it reinforces and helps us use the transportation system more efficiently? So that's one major—

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NEWSCASTER: In other words, put the people where the transportation is.

PISANO: That's right. And also put the people together such that they put less pressure and demands on the transportation system.

So that's – that's one component. And we've undertaken an effort to get all 186 cities and counties in Southern California working together to address that part of the plan.

The second part of the – the plan is: what are the important new investments that we need? And we're essentially calling for, in this plan, \$80 billion of new investments over and above what we're currently building.

And many of those are going to be what we call public-private partnerships in which the private sector, we'll call on them to help us build facilities such as lanes for trucks to go on, improvement in the rail corridors for the railroads to move their – more cargo on rail.

And then finally different lanes that will be toll-type facilities that are funded by revenue bonds. And we're also calling for increased taxes, not now but in the – once the economy recovers – in the year 2010 we're – we're saying let's – let's increase the – the price of gasoline to keep up with inflation so that we can build some of the other light rail and other mixed-flow facilities that this region needs.

NEWSCASTER: All right, let me stop you right there. Let's go back to the whole idea of adding lanes, for example. You mentioned that. It wasn't all that many months ago that there was a proposal to widen the 101 through the San Fernando Valley. The – the outrage, the screams were deafening on that. And it went belly up within a matter of a few days after that came out, people complaining, you know, you can't take a house, you can't a school, you can't take a business from alongside the road and put another road there.

So how – how are you going to practically do something in an area where virtually every major freeway, every major avenue of transportation is surrounded by homes and businesses?

PISANO: Well, a couple of ways. One, it is possible for us to put transit in some of these right-of-ways and not have large impact and taking of homes.

NEWSCASTER: Do double – double-decking?

PISANO: They could be elevated as opposed to double-decking. And – and secondly, we're also looking at putting High Occupancy Vehicle lanes in some of these corridors that don't have to have a large taking of homes.

And we recognize that housing and the need for housing is one of the region's priorities. So one of our – one of our approaches is we're not going to into corridors and take large number of houses, but we can find

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facilities that can design and – and put in the middle of them providing that the community understands and works with us to help design and build those, not us proposing to the communities but work with them so that they are acceptable and that they don't take their homes and that they don't find it unacceptable.

NEWSCASTER: What – what – any place that's being targeted right now? Where – where would you start? From this plan, where do you start to get the greatest efficiency from – from expanding a roadway or whatever?

PISANO: Well, the greatest efficiency that we have right now is -- in the region is the incredible volume of trucks that are moving out of our ports. We are now the logistics center for the United States if not the world. Those goods all need to move on – on our freeways.

And we need to find ways in which we can build facilities, work with our communities such that those – they find those facilities acceptable and don't impact on them.

But the greatest productivity is finding ways to move the goods within our region. And also we're working with the railroads to help them improve grade crossings, finish the Alameda Corridor, so to speak—

NEWSCASTER: Well, lot of work to be done.

PISANO: It really is. The region is facing major, major transportation and growth issues. And there's one other dimension about this plan that I want to mention. And that is, if we build these projects, it'll have a very large labor-force job-creation initiative. In fact, this plan would create 52,000 jobs per year if we move forward and implement them.

NEWSCASTER: Mark Pisano, the—

PISANO: Those are good-paying jobs, by the way.

NEWSCASTER: [laughs] Yeah. And – and always, as long as there's more people and more traffic, good-paying jobs for traffic reporters, I would suggest as well.

Mark Pisano, good to have you with us on the program today. Appreciate very much the update.

PISANO: Thank you.

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